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COMMITTEE ON TRADE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce

Fifty-fifth session
Geneva, 23-27 June 2008

**REPORT OF THE SPECIALIZED SECTION ON STANDARDIZATION
OF DRY AND DRIED PRODUCE ON ITS FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION**

Summary

Revised/new UNECE standards: The Specialized Section submitted to the Working Party the amended texts on dried peaches, pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels and inshell walnuts for approval as revised/new UNECE standards. The delegation of Germany was opposed to the acceptance of the revised Standard for Inshell Walnuts in its 2002 version, and will discuss this decision with the industry. These consultations may lead Germany to request the introduction of reservations to the Standard at the Working Party meeting.

Revised UNECE Recommendations: The Section recommended that the Working Party adopt the revised texts on blanched almond kernels and hazelnut kernels for trial use until the end of 2009. The revised texts on inshell macadamia nuts and macadamia kernels are recommended for trial use until the end of 2010.

Work in progress: Mexico presented the draft proposal of the Standard for whole dried chilli peppers. Following detailed discussions, the Section made some amendments and asked Mexico to present it at the 2009 session. The United States presented for discussion a proposal for the colour gauge for walnut kernels. The Section asked the United States to make some changes to the brochure and finalize it before the 2008 session of the Working Party.

Standard Layout: The Section revised the text of the Standard Layout and recommended that the Working Party adopt it as a new Standard Layout.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting was opened by the Secretary of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce, and was chaired by Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States of America).

II. PARTICIPATION

2. Representatives of the following countries attended the meeting: France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and United States of America.

3. A representative of the following non-governmental organization participated in the meeting as an observer: International Nut Council (INC).

4. At the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the private company Société Général de Surveillance (SGS) participated in the meeting.

III. APOLOGIES

5. The representative of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland sent apologies.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2008/1

6. The delegations adopted the provisional agenda. The document ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2008/5 was not submitted.

7. The following informal documents were added to the agenda:

Code	Title	Source*
INF.1	Explanatory note on the Standard for Whole Dried Chilli Peppers	Mexico (E)
INF.2	Explanatory note on the Standard for Whole Dates	Tunisia (F)
INF.3	UNECE Standards for Inshell Macadamia nuts and Macadamia Kernels: Comments	Australia (E)
INF.4	UNECE Standard for Inshell Walnuts: New proposal	France (E)
INF.5	UNECE Standard for Hazelnut Kernels: New proposal	Turkey (E)
INF.6	UNECE Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts: Editorial amendments	France (E)
INF.7	Explanatory brochure for UNECE Standard for Inshell Hazelnuts	Turkey (E)
INF.8	Draft UNECE colour gauge for Inshell Walnuts and Walnut Kernels	United States (E)
INF.9	Draft council decision revising the OECD "Scheme" for the application of international Standards for fruits and vegetables C(2006)95	OECD (E)

* E = English; F = French.

V. MATTERS OF INTEREST SINCE THE LAST SESSION (AGENDA ITEM 2)

A. UNECE and subsidiary bodies (agenda item 2(a))

Documentation: Report of the Committee on Trade (ECE/TRADE/C/2007/19)
Terms of reference (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/12)
Working procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/13)
Report of the Working Party (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/27)

8. The delegations were informed about the decisions of relevance to the work of the Specialized Section taken by the Committee on Trade at its October 2007 session (ECE/TRADE/C/2007/19, paras. 26-30) and by the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) at its sixty-third session (document ECE/TRADE/WP.7/2007/27, paras. 29-33, 36-41). The delegations welcomed the approval of the Working Party's new Terms of Reference by the UNECE Committee on Trade in October 2007 and by the Executive Committee in March 2008 (document ECE/EX/2008/L.8). According to the new Terms of Reference, "any member of the United Nations or of one of its specialized agencies can participate, on an equal footing, in the activities of WP.7 and its specialized sections".

9. The Specialized Section requested an amendment to section 5(c) of the Terms of Reference (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/12) by the addition of the following sentence: "All proposals must be supported by scientific, technical or economic data that support the need for a revision or amendment".

10. The delegations also discussed and requested the following amendments to the working procedures (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/13):

(a) In section IV (Meeting documentation and registration deadlines), paragraph 11, add the following text:

"Proposals for new work or revision of a Standard must detail:

- The purpose or the scope of the new Standard or revision of a Standard
- A list of technical, scientific or economic data detailing the need for a new Standard or a revision
- Information on the relationship between the proposal and any other existing international Standards
- Evidence showing that the proposal for a new or revised Standard will not result in a barrier to trade"

(b) In section V (The development/revision process and decision-making procedure), introduce a new paragraph 16, renumbering other paragraphs accordingly, with the following text: "16. The Working Party will review all the material submitted with the proposal, and take into account any economic impact the proposal may have on trade facilitation between countries before granting permission to begin work."

VI. STANDARD LAYOUT (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Documentation: 2007 Standard Layout (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/15)

11. The Specialized Section reviewed the Standard Layout, which had been adopted by the Working Party for a trial period until the end of 2008. The delegations discussed and agreed on the amendments prepared at the working group meeting. The Section also considered and agreed on the proposal by the delegation of the United States to add the following introductory paragraph on the cover page: “The Standard Layout is a guide to follow when developing or revising Standards. Due to various commodity characteristics not all sections of the Standard Layout may apply. It is permissible to use optional texts for those specific commodities”.

12. The Specialized Section decided to amend the definition of “shrivelled and shrunken” in annex III, section (b) “Specific definitions for nuts (inshell nuts and nut kernels)”, replacing the term “desiccated” by “dehydrated”.

13. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Standard Layout to the Working Party for approval.

VII. REVIEW OF UNECE RECOMMENDATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

14. The Specialized Section reviewed the following recommendations that had been adopted by the Working Party at its 2007 session for trial use until November 2008.

A. Pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels (agenda item 4(a))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-10: Pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels)

15. The Specialized Section decided to amend section II “Provisions concerning quality, A. Minimum requirements”, adding the option “Free from rancidity”, which had not been included in the original Recommendation. The delegates also decided that section “C. Classification” should be left unchanged.

16. The Specialized Section agreed that section III, “Provisions concerning sizing” should read: “Sizing of pistachio kernels and peeled pistachio kernels is optional; when sized, sizing is done by the number of kernels per 100 grams or per ounce.”

17. Based on the experience acquired while handling peeled pistachio kernels, several delegations found the figures on Table of Tolerances, option “Halves (split) and broken if wholes are specified” too restrictive for classes Extra and Class I. They recommended that the percentage for Extra Class should be increased from 15 to 20 per cent and for Class I from 20 to 30 per cent. The Turkish delegation will discuss these new figures with the industry and submit their comments to the secretariat at their earliest convenience but not later than 15 August 2008.

18. The Specialized Section agreed to the proposal by the United States to amend the text of “Uniformity” in section V “Provisions concerning presentation” by adding the following text:

“If indicated, the lot is considered to be uniform:
Whole: 80 % whole kernels
Split: 75 % halves
Whole and broken: any combination.”

19. The Specialized Section agreed to amend options “size” and “crop year” in section “D. Commercial specifications” of “Provisions concerning marking” with the following text:

- size (if sized); expressed as number of kernels per 100 grams or per ounce
- crop year (optional).

20. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text for adoption by the Working Party as a new Standard.

B. Dried peaches (agenda item 4(b))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-...: Dried peaches)

21. Following discussions among delegates on whether it would apply to dried peaches intended for industrial processing, the Specialized Section confirmed the definition of the product as it is in the recommendation. After taking note that this Recommendation had been on trial for two years, the Section decided that the last sentence should remain as, “This Standard does not apply to dried peaches that are processed by sugaring, flavouring or for industrial processing.”

22. Delegates discussed and agreed on the section “II. Provisions concerning quality”, with two exceptions:

- (a) Category “Sufficiently ripe” was deleted from the “Minimum requirements”;
- (b) In section “B. Moisture content”, the figures in the second paragraph should read: “The dried peaches treated with preservatives or preserved by other means (e.g. pasteurization) may have moisture content between 20.0 and 37.0 per cent”.

23. Under section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances”, delegates kept returning to the subject of acceptable percentages of mould to be tolerated. The issue of moisture activity rather than moisture content was raised as a possible means of measure to be included in the Standard. Since moisture activity has not been measured in other dry and dried produce Standards, the Specialized Section accepted the table as it reads, removing the brackets.

24. The Specialized Section agreed to amend “Provisions concerning marking”, section “D. Commercial specifications”, to read as follows:

- class
- size (if sized); expressed in accordance with section III
- crop year (optional)
- moisture content (optional, but mandatory for high moisture)
- “Best before” followed by the date (optional).

25. To align this modified provision with the text of the Standard Layout, the mention “mandatory according to the legislation of the importing country” was removed from specifications “Crop year” and “Best before”.

26. Other changes introduced in the text of the Standard are marked in document “Dried Peaches-Revised”, which can be downloaded from the UNECE website.

27. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Standard for Dried Peaches to the Working Party for adoption as a new UNECE standard.

C. Blanched almond kernels (agenda item 4(c))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-...: Blanched Almond Kernels)

28. The Specialized Section amended section “Definition of produce” to make explicit that the Standard is intended for “whole” sweet blanched almond kernels.

29. Following the discussions on the tolerated area with adhered skin, the delegates agreed to add to “Provisions concerning quality”, section “A. Minimum requirements” a new condition: “free of adhering skin exceeding an aggregated area of 6 mm in diameter”. It was also decided to amend the description of shrunken and shrivelled kernels, replacing the term “desiccated” by “dehydrated”.

30. Following a proposal from delegations, the section “III. Provisions concerning sizing” was amended to reflect that sizing of blanched almond kernels is optional for every class, not only for Class II. Previously, the Standard had defined sizing as being mandatory for categories Extra Class and Class I.

31. Based on the experience acquired during the trial period, the Section introduced the following amendments in the table of tolerances:

(a) The maximum tolerances for category “Gum, brown spot, blemishes and discoloration” reduced their values for Extra class from 4 to 3 per cent and class I from 7 to 5 per cent.

(b) The maximum tolerances for category “Split, broken and halves” increased the value for Extra class from 3 to 5 per cent.

(c) To add tolerances by size for produce not conforming to the size indicated, if sized. The maximum value accepted for Extra Class, Class I and Class II is 20 per cent.

32. Based on the amendments to the table of tolerances, the Section decided to remove those complementary paragraphs after the table, notably section “B. Size tolerances”.

33. The Specialized Section agreed to amend “Provisions concerning marking”, section “D. Commercial specifications”, to read as follows:

- class
- size (if sized); expressed by:
 - the minimum and the maximum diameters measured in millimetres, or
 - the minimum diameter followed by the words “and plus” or other equivalent wording, or
 - the maximum diameter, followed by the words “and less” or other equivalent wording, or
 - the minimum and the maximum count per 100 g or per ounce
- crop year (optional)
- “Best before” followed by the date (optional).

34. Other changes introduced in the text of the Standard are marked in document “Blanched almond kernels-Revised”, which can be downloaded from the UNECE website.

35. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Recommendation for Blanched Almond Kernels to the Working Party for trial use until the end of 2009. All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year, in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the secretariat.

VIII. REVISION OF UNECE STANDARDS (AGENDA ITEM 5)

A. Hazelnut kernels (agenda item 5(a))

Documentation: The Recommendation (DDP-04: Hazelnut Kernels)
Proposal by Turkey (INF.5, Informal document)

36. The Specialized Section discussed section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances” to clarify the question of including “old crop” in footnotes to the table of tolerances. Following the discussions, delegations decided to remove the footnotes concerning old crop and amend the table of tolerances with respect to damage caused by *cimiciatto pentatomidae*.

37. The following table contains the final categories and tolerances agreed by the Section.

Defects allowed	Tolerances allowed percentage of defective hazelnut kernels, by number or weight (with regard to the total hazelnut kernel weight basis)		
	Extra	Class I	Class II
(a) Tolerances for hazelnut kernels not satisfying the minimum requirements Of which no more than	5	14	18
- Not sufficiently developed, including shrunken and shrivelled kernels	2	4	8
- Mouldy	0.5	1.5	2.5
- Rancid or damaged by pests, rotting, deterioration	2	4	6
- Of which rancid not more than	1	2	3
- Damaged kernels and pieces not passing through a 5 mm round-meshed sieve	3	8	10
- Pieces passing through a 5 mm round-meshed sieve	0.5	1	2
- Living pests	0	0	0
(b) Size tolerances¹			
For produce not conforming to the size indicated, if sized			
For round	10	10	10
For pointed and oblong	15	15	15
If sized with 1mm intervals			
For round	15	15	15
For pointed and oblong	20	20	20
(c) Tolerances for other defects			
- Foreign matter, including shell fragments, fragments of hull, dust (by weight)	0.25	0.25	0.25
- Twin kernels	2	5	8
- Hazelnut kernels belonging to varieties or commercial types other than that indicated	10	10	10

38. The Specialized Section discussed at length the question of rancidity, mould, damaged by pests and deterioration, its relation with old crops and the impact of the cimiciatto in the accepted tolerances for defects allowed. The following sentence was added to the provisions concerning quality, minimum requirements/pest damage “However, pest damage caused by cimiciatto is

¹ The presence of hazelnuts 0.2 mm above or below the size laid down shall not be regarded as a defect.

allowed, provided that the flesh is not affected and the spot on the skin does not exceed 3 mm in diameter”.

39. Other changes introduced in the text of the Standard are marked in document “Hazelnut kernels – Revised” which can be downloaded from the UNECE website.

40. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Recommendation for Hazelnut Kernels to the Working Party for trial use until the end of 2009. All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year, in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the secretariat.

B. Inshell walnuts (agenda item 5(b))

Documentation: UNECE standard for Inshell Walnuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/21)
The Standard (DDP-01: Inshell Walnuts)
Proposal by France (INF.4, Informal document)

41. The secretary reminded delegations that the Standard (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/2007/21) had not been approved at the 2007 session of the Working Party because some delegations considered it did not reflect industry practices. The text was returned to the Specialized Section for revision of the table of tolerances. The trial period of the 2002 Recommendation (DDP-01 Inshell Walnuts, document TRADE/WP.7/2002/9/Add.14) was extended for two more years.

42. The review of this Standard began in a session of the working group on Monday. Following the decision of the Working Party, the Section started discussions on different aspects coming from the available documentation. When reviewing the proposal of France (INF.4), the questions on uniformity, classes and “defined mixture of varieties” defined under “Provisions concerning marking, section B. Nature of produce” were discussed at length. The delegation of Germany pointed out that provisions related to the region of growing (such as definitions of mixture of varieties) should not be mixed with the provisions on classification.

43. Although discussions on this Standard have been going on for 10 years, the issue of tolerances was apparently still in question. However, it was suggested that the table of tolerances remain the same as the existing Standard but that the classifications be modified at this time.

44. The representative of INC noted that trading countries, large and small, are working with the existing Standard with little or no difficulty.

45. The delegation of Germany was opposed to the acceptance of the revised Standard for Inshell Walnuts in its 2002 version and wished a strict alignment to the Standard Layout submitted for approval to the Working Party. They believe that the new Standard Layout has the following merits:

(a) The definitions annexed to DDP-01 are incorporated into the minimum requirements and thus clarify the situation on the limits allowed in the relevant requirement.

(b) The provisions on "mineral impurities" are replaced by a tolerance for foreign matter.

(c) The classification is strictly based on the table of tolerances, which exactly reflects the trade practice; whereas DDP-01 requests additional and contradicting provisions for the single classes.

(d) The uniformity as to variety or commercial type is required only if the relevant information is given on the package.

(e) The commercialization of mixed varieties – even if the mixture is not officially defined in the country of origin – is allowed in Classes "Extra" and Class I. This reflects trade practice much better, especially in countries that do not have those official definitions.

46. The majority of delegates decided to recommend that the trial period for this Standard end now and that the 2002 version of the Standard be adopted as the Standard for Inshell Walnuts and sent to the Working Party. The Specialized Section agreed to revert to the 2002 version of the Standard.

47. Based on the latter agreement, France took the decision to withdraw the document INF. 4 from the discussions.

48. The delegation of Germany expressed that they have to discuss this decision with the industry and sector. These consultations may lead Germany to request the introduction of reservations to the Standard at the next meeting of the Working Party.

IX. NEW UNECE STANDARDS (AGENDA ITEM 6)

A. Inshell macadamia nuts and macadamia kernels (agenda item 6(a))

Documentation: Draft Standard for Inshell Macadamia Nuts (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2008/2)
Draft Standard for Macadamia Kernels (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2008/3)
Comments by Australia (INF.3, Informal document)

49. The Specialized Section was informed that the secretariat had received comments on the Standards for inshell macadamia nuts and for macadamia kernels from Australia (INF.3).

Inshell macadamia nuts

50. At its 2007 session the Specialized Section left the text of the Standard for inshell macadamia nuts as work in progress.

51. Following a proposal from delegations, the section "B. Moisture content" of "Provisions concerning quality" was amended, increasing its maximum accepted value from 3.0 to 10.0 per cent.

52. The Specialized Section amended the “Provisions concerning sizing” to define that size should be determined by the diameter of the shortest axis of the shell when the produce is sized. They also added the following text to represent uniformity in size:

- “Uniformity in size is expressed by:
 - A size range defined by a maximum size and a minimum size which must not exceed ± 5 mm (1/5 inch) of difference, or
 - Screening defined as a minimum size in diameter.

53. The table representing size designations should be also amended to reflect current figures of the diameters in inches.

54. The following changes were introduced to the table of tolerances:

- (a) “Unopened cracks” was placed in brackets;
- (b) Move category “Loose/foreign extraneous material” from “(a) Tolerances for the shell not satisfying the minimum requirements” to “Other defects”;
- (c) Update the table accordingly.

55. The Specialized Section agreed to amend “Provisions concerning marking”, section “D. Commercial specifications”, to align it with the text of the Standard Layout. The sentence “mandatory according to the legislation of the importing country” was removed from the specification of “Crop year”. The specification for “net weight” was also removed.

56. Other changes introduced in the text are marked in document “Inshell Macadamia Nuts - Revised” that can be downloaded from the UNECE website.

57. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Recommendation for Inshell Macadamia Nuts to the Working Party for trial use for two years until the end of 2010. All delegations were invited to study the text for a further year, in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the secretariat.

Macadamia kernels

58. At its 2007 session, the Specialized Section left the text of the Standard for Macadamia kernels as work in progress.

59. The Specialized Section agreed with the following amendments requested by delegations:

(a) In section “Minimum requirements” of the “Provisions concerning quality”, make explicit that some of the characteristics applies for whole kernels only, notably characteristic “intact”, “sufficiently developed” and “free from blemishes”. Such text was amended to read as follows:

- “Intact (for whole kernels only); however, ...”
- “Whole kernels should be sufficiently developed; ...”

- “free from blemishes, areas of discoloration or spread stains in pronounced contrast with the rest of the kernel/pieces. For whole kernels this should not affect in aggregate more than 25 per cent of the surface of the kernel.

(b) Additionally, the Section replaced the term “desiccated” by “dehydrated”.

60. The delegation of Australia submitted comments expressing that they believe that product uniformity does not require Standardization because it may constitute a technical barrier to trade and innovation in food products. However, they submitted a proposal to amend the existing style parameters defined in “Provisions concerning presentation”.

61. Following the discussions, the Section decided to move the style parameters from “Provisions concerning presentation” to “Provisions concerning sizing”, adding a new style 0 requested by Australia. The text of the new style should read: “Style 0 - (Wholes) shall consist of not less than 95 per cent whole kernels, with the remaining percentage consisting of pieces, of which not more than 1 per cent will pass through a 6.25 mm (1/4 inch) square opening.”

62. The Specialized Section amended the table of tolerances, introducing the following changes:

(a) Add new category (b) for size tolerances for produce not conforming to the size indicated, if sized. Classes I and II should have a tolerance of 7 per cent.

(b) Add new category “Loose foreign material, including particles of shell” to other tolerances. The recommended figures for Class I correspond to 1 or 2 per cent and for Class II, 2 or 4 per cent. The whole category was marked with square bracket to be revisited in the future.

63. Since section “B. Size tolerances” was included in the table of tolerances, the delegations decided to remove it from the text of the Standard.

64. The Specialized Section asked the secretariat to align the text with the new Standard Layout.

65. The Specialized Section recommended submitting the amended text of the Recommendation for Macadamia Kernels to the Working Party for trial use for two years until the end of 2010. All delegations were invited to study the text in cooperation with their industry, and to send comments to the secretariat.

B. Whole dried chilli peppers (agenda item 6(b))

Documentation: Draft Standard for whole dried chilli peppers (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.7/GE.2/2008/4)
Explanatory note from Mexico (INF.1, Informal document)

66. The delegation of Mexico presented the draft Standard for whole dried chilli peppers and thanked the delegations and the secretariat for all the support and comments received.

67. The Specialized Section welcomed the presentation of the draft Standard. The delegations made the following suggestions for further work on the text:

- (a) Align, to the extent possible, the draft Standard with the Standard Layout;
- (b) Use terminology (e.g. “varieties”, “commercial types”) consistently throughout the text;
- (c) Simplify sizing provisions; using as a reference the section “III. Provisions concerning sizing” that was recommended for the draft Standard for Fresh Chilli Peppers;
- (d) Make description of defects understandable to non-experts applying the Standard;
- (e) Consider the possibility of collecting literature to prepare an explanatory brochure, which would considerably facilitate practical application of the Standard.

68. Delegations discussed “Provisions concerning quality”, section “D. Colour” and recommended that the figures in column “Colour (°Hue)” of table 2 should be represented with only one decimal. This would facilitate industry and scientific sectors classifying the produce in categories according to its colour.

69. To simplify annex I, the Section asked the delegation of Mexico to remove definitions of package, packs, faeces or excrement, moisture, insects and foreign matter.

70. The Specialized Section asked the delegation of Mexico to prepare, in cooperation with other producing and exporting countries, a revised draft of the Standard for consideration at the 2009 session. The text could then be submitted to the Working Party for approval as a recommendation.

71. Other changes introduced in the text of the Standard are marked in document “Whole dried chilli peppers-Revised”, which can be downloaded from the UNECE website.

X. UNECE COLOUR GAUGE FOR INSHELL WALNUTS AND WALNUT KERNELS (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Documentation: Draft UNECE colour gauge for inshell walnuts and walnut kernels (printed copy)

72. The United States distributed a revised colour gauge for discussion. The Specialized Section was of the opinion that the colours should be improved to better illustrate the colour difference between kernels of the same class.

73. The delegation of the United States informed the meeting that the US walnut industry had volunteered to draw up and publish the brochure on inshell walnuts and walnut kernels. The amended draft of the brochure will be submitted to the Section by 15 August for comments prior to the November meeting of the Working Party.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 8)

A. Dates, whole (agenda item 8(a))

Documentation: The Standard (DDP-08: Whole Dates)
Explanatory note from Tunisia (INF. 2, Informal document)

74. A request was made by the delegation of Tunisia to Germany, Poland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to remove their reservations from the UNECE standard for Whole Dates (DDP-08).

75. The delegation of Germany expressed its interest in removing its reservation provided that the entire Standard be revised to reflect organic products. The Specialized Section supported the idea of revising the complete Standard to align it with the new Standard Layout rather than merely adjusting its provisions with minor amendments.

76. The delegation of Germany expressed its interest in preparing a revised version of the Standard for Whole Dates aligned with the current Standard Layout. The proposal will be presented to the 2009 meeting of the Section. Delegations were invited to submit their comments to the delegation of Germany.

B. Work by the OECD Scheme on the sampling plan (Agenda item 8(b))

Documentation: OECD C (2006) 95
Draft Council decision revising the OECD “Scheme” for the application of international Standards for fruits and vegetables
TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2003/15/Add.2
Draft sampling and inspection procedure
Inshell Hazelnuts (INF.6, Informal document)

77. The Specialized Section discussed on progress made on this matter and decided to reactivate the work on the sampling plan.

78. Following the discussions, the delegation of Germany expressed its willingness to lead a revision of the work on the sampling plan that has been done in the past by the Section. As a reference for such work, they will use the document TRADE/WP.7/GE.2/2003/15/Add.2.

79. The Specialized Section amended the sizing methods in the Standard on Inshell Hazelnuts based on the proposal submitted by France.

XII. FUTURE WORK (AGENDA ITEM 9)

80. The Specialized Section proposed the following items for future work, as indicated in the draft provisional agenda for the 2009 session, contained in the annex to this report. Further proposals should be submitted to the secretariat at least 12 weeks before the next session. The deadline for submitting documents is 27 March 2009.

81. Additionally, other items listed below might be considered:

- (a) Evaluation of the implementation of UNECE standards;
- (b) Sharing information on national systems of application of agricultural quality Standards.

82. The delegation of Germany will present a proposal of the revised version of the Standard for Whole Dates aligned with the new Standard Layout.

83. The delegation of Germany will undertake a review of the OECD sampling plan. The delegations are invited to submit their comments to the delegation.

84. The secretariat will post the amended documents on the UNECE website: <http://www.unece.org/trade/agr/meetings/ge.02/2008-in-session.htm>

85. The next session of the Specialized Section has been tentatively scheduled to be held from 22 to 26 June 2009.

XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (AGENDA ITEM 10)

86. The Specialized Section re-elected Mr. Dorian LaFond (United States) as Chair and Mr. Sait Sözümert (Turkey) as Vice-Chair.

XIV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 11)

87. The Specialized Section adopted the report of its fifty-fifth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

ANNEX

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION

(22 to 26 June 2009)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Matters of interest since the last session
 - (a) UNECE and subsidiary bodies
 - (b) Other organizations
3. Review of the UNECE recommendations
 - (a) Blanched almond kernels (trial until November 2009)
 - (b) Inshell macadamia nuts (trial until November 2010)
 - (c) Macadamia kernels (trial until November 2010)
 - (d) Hazelnut kernels (trial until November 2009)
4. Proposals to revise UNECE standards
 - (a) Whole dates
5. Draft new UNECE standards
 - (a) Whole dried chilli peppers
6. Explanatory brochures
 - (a) Inshell walnuts and walnut kernels
 - (b) Hazelnuts kernels
7. Review of the sampling plan
8. Other business
9. Future work
10. Election of officers
11. Adoption of the report
